



UNCLASSIFIED

DATE:

File No.: PS-035419
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE MINISTER OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

**REQUEST FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FROM ALBERTA TO PROVIDE
ASSISTANCE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (ALEA) IN COUTTS,
ALBERTA**

(Signature required)

ISSUE

To reply to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for the Province of Alberta's Request for Federal Assistance (RFA) to provide Assistance to Law Enforcement Activities (ALEA) for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in Coutts, Alberta.

BACKGROUND

Since January 29, 2022, demonstrations have been occurring near the Coutts, Alberta, border crossing to the United States, where heavy vehicles are impeding the flow of traffic. These demonstrations are in support of the demonstrations ongoing in Ottawa, Ontario. Attempts by the RCMP, along with local and provincial officials, have been partially successful in persuading the participants of the demonstration to remove their vehicles. Traffic is flowing through the Port of Entry at a reduced volume, with one lane of traffic open in each direction. There are alternate Ports of Entry nearby that have commercial traffic lanes and hours have been extended at those locations to help mitigate disruptions the Coutts border crossing.

On February 5, 2022, the Minister of Municipal Affairs for the Province of Alberta submitted an RFA (TAB B) to provide ALEA assistance to the RCMP. Specifically, the request is for the provision of equipment and personnel to move approximately 70 semi-tractor trailers and 75 personal and recreational vehicles from the area of the Coutts border crossing. The request details the fact that attempts were made by the RCMP and the Province of Alberta to procure these services from providers from across the Western provinces and the United States, but the attempts were unsuccessful. This could be the result of private industry's concerns about experiencing negative consequences should they assist with the removal of impediments.

Canada

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All key partners have been consulted on the ability of the Government of Canada to assist with this request. Given the lack of commercial resources, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) were identified as the only Federal asset that might potentially meet the request, however, discussions with CAF have made it clear that the CAF possess neither the type of assets required nor the expertise to do this without significant risk.

In addition, this remains an issue within provincial jurisdiction. Alberta has the required legal authorities necessary to enforce compliance, as a highway is considered essential infrastructure, and it is unlawful to willfully obstruct, interrupt or interfere with the construction, maintenance, use or operation of any essential infrastructure in a manner that renders the essential infrastructure dangerous, useless, inoperative or ineffective as per the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act* of Alberta. There are a number of contraventions of other applicable legislation that may also be enforced by Alberta and its police forces. Addition policing and regulatory supports to the province are being actioned or considered by lead departments.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you sign the enclosed reply letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for the Province of Alberta (TAB B) to indicate that the Government of Canada refusing this RFA at this time.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Trevor Bhupsingh, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management and Programs Branch, at 613-993-4325.

Stewart
, Robert
Rob Stewart

Digitally signed by
Stewart, Robert
Date: 2022.02.09
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Enclosures: (2)

I approve:

I do not approve:

Bill Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P.

Bill Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P.

Prepared by: Tristan Green



ALBERTA
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Hays*

February 5, 2022

Honourable Marco Mendicino
Minister of Public Safety
Government of Canada
Ottawa ON, K1A 0A8

Honourable Bill Blair
Minister of Emergency Preparedness
Government of Canada
Ottawa ON, K1A 0P8

Dear Minister Mendicino and Minister Blair,

As you are aware, Alberta is currently experiencing significant issues with the free movement of vehicles and supplies in southern Alberta with direct impacts to our largest border crossing with the United States. Despite our best efforts to resolve this ongoing issue, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have exhausted all local and regional options to alleviate the week-long service disruptions at this important international border.

The RCMP, along with local and provincial officials, have been working closely in an attempt to persuade the demonstration participants to remove their vehicles but have been unsuccessful. In addition, as a result of private industry concerns over negative consequences, the RCMP have been unable to secure the appropriate heavy duty equipment required to remove vehicles and other items such as trailers and tractors from the area. Attempts to procure these services with providers from across the Western provinces and the United States have failed.

In order to ensure a return of free movement of people, vehicles and goods and services through this pivotal location, we are seeking federal assistance in removing obstructions from the highway. The RCMP, and other partner law enforcement agencies, will ensure that the locations are secured and will remove demonstrators and bystanders from the area prior to the removal of vehicles and equipment, in order to mitigate risks of potential conflict.

To support this approach, I am requesting federal assistance that includes the provision of equipment and personnel to move approximately 70 semi-tractor trailers and approximately 75 personal and recreational vehicles from the area.

As this complex and dynamic situation continues to impede the free and safe movement of not only Albertans, but also of critical goods and services vital to both the Canadian and American economy, we are looking to the Government of Canada for assistance. I and my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, or our respective staff members, are available to discuss these requirements, but am hopeful that Alberta's request will be received favourably and responded to promptly.

Sincerely,

Honourable Ric McIver
Minister of Municipal Affairs

cc: Honourable Sonya Savage, Acting Minister of Justice and Solicitor General



